



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

**Monday, March 19, 2012**

**10:00 AM**

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-1272)

**Attachments:**    [AUDIO](#)

Present:            Chair Patricia Curry, Vice Chair Geneva Berger, Vice Chair  
                         Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi,  
                         Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Helen A.  
                         Kleinberg, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, Commissioner  
                         Rev. Cecil L. Murray, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq.,  
                         Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin  
                         LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused:           Vice Chair Dr. Sunny Kang and Commissioner  
                         Dr. Harriette F. Williams

Call to order. (12-1209)

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:05 a.m.**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Introductions of March 19, 2012, meeting attendees. (11-1059)

**Self-introductions were made.**

2. Approval of the agenda for March 19, 2012. (12-1210)

**On motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Biondi,  
unanimously carried, this item was approved.**

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of March 5, 2012. (12-1211)

**On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner  
McClaney, unanimously carried, this item was approved.**

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

## **II. REPORT**

4. Chair's report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for March 19, 2012. (12-1212)

**Chair Curry presented a verbal report on the following:**

- **The Faith-Based Workgroup, headed by Vice Chair Kang, will not meet this afternoon (March 19, 2012). The next meeting is scheduled on April 16, 2012. Workgroup meetings will be scheduled for the 3rd Monday of every month for the remainder of the year.**
- **The 2011/2012 Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests are due for Commission members. Commission Staff has copies of forms for Commissioners' completion.**
- **Notices will be e-mailed to Commissioners who are due to take the AB1234 Ethics Training. Commissioners may contact staff to inquire about the availability of instructor-led classes, if an instructor-led course is preferred over the online course.**
- **The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) - SPA 6 has invited Commissioners' to attend the "Connecting Families and Communities", Youth Empowerment Conference and Community Resource Fair that will be held on May 19, 2012. Written correspondence was distributed by Chair Curry regarding this event.**
- **The Chief Executive Officer is seeking volunteers to be considered for appointment to Redevelopment Oversight Boards, created to wind down the affairs of former Redevelopment agencies. Commissioners can advise Commission staff or the Chair Curry if interested in becoming a member.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

### **III. PRESENTATION**

5. Presentation by the Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) the importance of connecting young children to child development services - even during a budget crisis.

- Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W., Chair, Roundtable
- Michele P. Sartell, Program Specialist III, Office of Child Care/Service Integration Branch, Chief Executive Office  
(Relates to Agenda Item No. 6.) (12-1213)

**Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W., Chair, Roundtable presented two videos from the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, “Experiences Build Brain Architecture” and “Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development”. She distributed a handout that was verbally summarized with the following:**

**Research indicates that:**

- **The potential for brain cell development is present at birth; this potential decreases with the absence of experiences that support development. Relationships are crucial in the early stages of development. Brain cells that are not exercised will die. The more one ages, the more difficult it is to change behavior. Experiences in the early years provide the foundation for lifetime development.**
- **Toxic Stress derails healthy development. When stress is experienced at an early age, the stress response system is set at high alert over a period of time and causes hormones to remain at increased levels which reduce the brain’s ability to repair itself. This is a factor that contributes most to the decrease in brain cells. The research of Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Center on the Developing Child, found that, “Young children who experience the burdens of multiple economic and social stressors enter preschool with higher rates of emotional difficulties related to fear and anxiety, disruptive behaviors, impairments in executive functions and self-regulation, and a range of difficulties categorized as behavior problems, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or mental health problems.” These challenges can be mediated through healthy relationships with adults. Caregivers who are calming can help children to learn coping skills and to develop executive functioning. Dr. Shonkoff’s research emphasizes the importance of executive functioning in order to be successful.**

- **Dr. Shonkoff's findings indicates that there is an opportunity for a two-generation program that will improve the executive function for young mothers who did not experience the development of this function and their children. Teaching the mother self-regulation would filter to her child.**
- **Longitudinal evaluations show the impact that early childhood development programs have on the success of an individual in all aspects of life.**
- **The Federal Reserve conducted a cost benefit analysis that demonstrates that investment in the early years of childhood development provides the most significant return on investment. A study on the Perry School showed a %17 return on investment.**
- **People in the areas of neuroscience and child development are aware of the research and relationship between brain science and early child development from neuroimaging, long term evaluations, and financial analysis. However, there is concern that the child welfare system is not as aware of these advances.**

**The Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) recommends the following next steps:**

- **The Roundtable and the Commission for Children and Families work together to distribute this information on the relationship between brain science and early child development throughout the child welfare organization.**
- **The Roundtable and the Commission collaborate on developing two-generational programs that focus on the development of executive functioning, targeting 15-25 year old mothers for potential implementation in:**
  - **Family Reunification Programs.**
  - **Foster Family Agencies.**
  - **Children in "Family Maintenance"**
- **The pilot testing for these programs should begin with pregnant and parenting teens within the DCFS and Probation system.**

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**Michele P. Sartell, Program Specialist III, Office of Child Care/Service Integration Branch, Chief Executive Office reported the following:**

- **Focusing the two-generational program on teen parents provides an opportunity to prevent their children from entering the child welfare system. Additionally through the two-generational program reunification services can be provided for children of teens that are already in the system while both teen parent and child are still in the system**
- **In 2010, the CEO facilitated training to Juvenile Deputy Probation Officers on early brain development, the strengthening families approach and how to help families navigate the child care and development programs. The intent was to target teens in the Probation system and DCFS system.**

**In July 2010, DCFS began offering Pregnant and Parenting Teen Conferences utilizing the Family Group Decision Making Model.**

- **DCFS has made an effort to capture the number of teen parents in the system, and to date DCFS has identified 289 teen parents as of May 2011. The majority of the children of teens are between the ages of birth to three-years-old.**
- **On March 28, 2012, Ms. Sartell will be making a presentation on the benefits of child care and development services to the DCFS Regional Administrators. An invitation has also been extended to those DCFS Offices with the largest number of teen parents in order to present to the Children Social Workers the benefits on early childhood development.**
- **Additional areas being explored by the Roundtable include:**
  - **Helping teen parents connect with the Early Head Start Program through the Head Start Referral System.**
  - **Increasing teen parents' usage of the Alternative Payment Program, a child care program that subsidizes child care through payment vouchers available for families for up to 18 months. The program is available through the DCFS Child Care Unit.**
  - **Ensuring that child care and development needs of pregnant and parenting teens are identified and addressed as part of the Independent and Transitional Living Programs to ensure teens have the support to be successful in society.**

- The Office of Child Care has published a number of materials on child care and development services and how one can enroll in these services. The materials are designed for teen parents as well as those who are in a position to help teens navigate through the system to seek resources.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection,, this item was received and filed.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

#### **IV. DISCUSSIONS**

6. Discussion by the Commission and Policy Roundtable for Child Care on strategies to address the importance of connecting young children to child development services - even during a budget crisis.  
(Relates to Agenda Item No. 5.) (12-1214)

**Chair Curry opened up a roundtable discussion on the presentation by the Roundtable discussed in Item No. 5, and on preparing youth to transition out of the child welfare system.**

**Chair Curry questioned the impact Assembly Bill 12 (AB12) has on teen parents in the system. She added that recent numbers indicate that 82% of youth are opting to remain in the system. Chair Curry suggested expanding the preparation of youth transitioning out of the child welfare system to the DCFS Pregnant and Parenting Teen (PPT) Workgroup headed by Donna Fernandez of the DCFS Child Welfare Health Services Section.**

**Philip L. Browning, Director, DCFS added that in terms of resources to prevent teen pregnancy, staff is not comfortable discussing sex education with the youth.**

**In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. McCroskey, responded with the following:**

- **The First 5 LA contracts with 211 LA County, the County' 24-hour information line to County resources that offers a central location for resources. It is not confirmed to what extent the resources are being utilized.**

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- **Given the serious current budget crisis, there are still providers with State contracts that have vacancies. However, resources are not being utilized to the full extent to fill these vacancies. There is lack of systemization between the programs and resources.**

**Michele P. Sartell, Program Specialist III, Office of Child Care/Service Integration Branch, Chief Executive Office added:**

- **There is not enough government funding for families eligible for subsidized services. The system is difficult for families to navigate through the resources. There is a need for a system that can help families navigate through the services and reach the necessary resources.**

**Chair Curry agreed with Ms. McCroskey to coordinate an additional meeting with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care to have joint discussions on improving available resources for children and families.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

**7. Recommendation to nominate Commissioner Sorkin to the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.**

- **Patricia Curry, Chair (12-1220)**

**Chair Curry announced Commissioner Ann Franzen's resignation from the Policy Roundtable for Childcare and her request to remain as an alternate on this body. The Chair explained the nomination process of the Roundtable, and that County Counsel is conducting research to determine if an alternate position is permitted.**

**Chair Curry presented Commissioner Franzen with a Certificate of Appreciation for the years of dedication and service representing the Commission for Children and Families on the Roundtable.**

**After discussion, on motion of Commissioner McClaney, seconded by Commissioner Biondi, unanimously carried, the Commission nominated Commissioner Sorkin to the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors.**

**Chair Curry informed the Commission that she will work with Commission staff to prepare a letter to the appropriate parties informing them of Commissioner Sorkin's nomination to the Policy Roundtable for Child Care.**

**V. WORKGROUP UPDATES**

**8. Relative Caregivers Workgroup**

- Patricia Curry, Commission Representative  
(Carried over from the meeting of March 5, 2012) (12-1015)

**By common consent and there being no objection, this item was continued to the next Commission meeting scheduled for April 2, 2012.**

**9. VI. DCFS DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

DCFS Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Director, DCFS. (12-1215)

**Director Browning reported the following:**

- **A consultant has been hired to advise DCFS on its Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is currently in the draft stage and is expected to be ready for distribution within the next few weeks. The final stage of its publication is projected to be complete in the next couple of months.**

**The goal is to incorporate measurable activities that can be monitored to ensure the Department is moving forward on the identified strategies and action items of the Plan.**

- **DCFS currently has a number of staff vacancies at the executive level available for recruitment. Notices for these vacant positions have been sent to National organizations and to directors of public agencies. DCFS is also working with the consultant on the reorganization of the Department.**
- **DCFS is involved in looking forward to the IV-E Waiver (Waiver). The State and Child Welfare Director will be meeting with DCFS Director next week on the Waiver.**
- **DCFS is currently working on policies and practices to reduce the number of youth in group home care. Some of these initiatives include:**
  - **Increasing the number of treatment homes in the County to address the needs of children with challenging situations.**
  - **A policy was implemented in December 2011 that prohibits placement of children under the age of 8 in group home care without an approval from the DCFs Chief Deputy or the DCFS Director. An additional policy clarifying the process of placing a child in group home care is underway and will be distributed to the Department.**



- There is a potential for additional funding from the Katie A. State settlement which allows a rate increase to foster parents.
- The Command Post has been receiving approximately 4,000 children per year. Due to the limited space in the Command Post, the drop off of teenage youth during the night has been an issue. DCFS attended a meeting with the Departments of Mental Health (DMH), Public Health, and Health Services to discuss this issue with the Command Post. For the past few weekends, DMH has sent staff to the Command Post to assess the profile of youth being served. The goal is to have a nurse, a mental health professional, and DCFS staff from the placement unit present during nontraditional hours for the Command Post.

Shelter care contracts have been developed for the placement of youth received during the night hours. The goal is to get youth in placement within 30 days. However, moving problematic youth within this timeframe has been challenging causing the shelter care group homes to be reluctant to receiving problematic youth.

- Another issue recently discovered is that the DCFS Foster Care search engine used to contact Foster Care providers does not have current information. The Department is currently updating the system to ensure this search tool is working properly.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Director Browning added the following:

- The Command Post receives teenagers with varying circumstances. There are currently two committees, one established through DCFS and the other at the Chief Executive Office level examining the Command Post to identify ways to implement changes to the current practices in an effort to resolve issues.
- Director Browning will be meeting with legislators next month to provide information about DCFS.
- Assembly Member Jim Beall Jr., Chairman of the Assembly Select Committee on Foster Care is holding a special hearing on Foster Care in April 2012. The hearing will take place at Vista Del Mar Child and Family Service in Los Angeles.

**Chair Curry congratulated Director Browning on his official status as the Director of DCFS.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

## **VII. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Matters Not Posted**

- 10.** Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-1217)

**There were no matters posted.**

### **Public Comment**

- 11.** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-1216)

**Danny Ramos addressed the Commission.**

### **Announcements**

- 12.** Announcements for the meeting of March 19, 2012. (12-1218)

**There were none.**

### **Adjournment**

- 13.** Adjournment for the meeting of March 19, 2012. (12-1219)

**The meeting was adjourned by Chair Curry at 11:56 a.m.**